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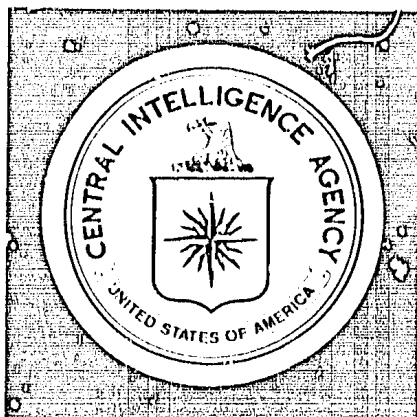
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14 NOV 1972

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LEBANON: A clash between striking workers and police has provided Prime Minister Salam's opponents with an opportunity to attack the government.

Two persons were killed and several more wounded in an incident between police and striking workers at a Beirut chocolate factory over the weekend. This incident triggered a call by union leaders for a general strike today in Beirut. A general strike yesterday in Tripoli was reported to be 50-percent effective. The government, which already has its hands full controlling the fedayeen, has placed the army in charge of security and moved additional troops and armor into the capital city.

Salam's opponents on both the right and left are supporting the unions in the hope of embarrassing the government and possibly forcing the prime minister to resign. In recent months, public criticism of the government has been increasing as a result of its inability to cope with such major domestic issues as education policy, unemployment, and the development of backward regions. Salam may survive the present crisis, but the number of Lebanese disenchanted with his government clearly is growing. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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SAUDI ARABIA - AFRICA: King Faysal will begin a two-week, five-nation tour of Africa today in an effort to strengthen Saudi Arabia's ties with the Muslim populations of the continent.

Faysal will stop first for a three-day visit in Uganda, which recently received a \$15-million, interest-free loan from the Saudis for use in development projects. Although Muslims make up only a small proportion of Uganda's population, President Idi Amin is among them, and Faysal has looked favorably on Amin's expressions of Arab-African solidarity, as well as his expulsion of the Israelis last March.

Other stops on Faysal's itinerary, each of approximately three days' duration, include Chad, Senegal, Mauritania, and Niger, which have large Muslim populations. The Saudis have recently opened or intend to open embassies in each of these countries and in Uganda. Faysal sees Saudi Arabia as a bridge between the Arab nations and Muslim Africans, and he hopes to promote African support for the Palestinian and other Arab causes. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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ECUADOR-US: Several US tuna boats have been seized since Sunday for fishing within Ecuador's claimed 200-mile territorial sea. Some of the vessels have valid Ecuadorean fishing licenses and have been released, but (unlicensed vessels probably will be detained until fines are paid.) This action follows by less than a week a stiffening of Ecuador's tuna policy. The Ministry of Natural Resources has informed the US Government that, in the interest of conservation, the total annual tuna catch is to be limited to 80,000 tons, with a 60,000-ton limit for foreign boats. Last year, US vessels alone caught more than twice that tonnage. Fees for fishing licenses are also to be raised by 60 percent. Although it appears that the migratory tuna are less plentiful off Ecuador this season, the measures announced in Quito also represent an effort by Ecuador to strengthen its position in the continuing discussions with the US toward reaching a fishing accord. (CONFIDENTIAL)

* * * *

UK: Britain's trade balance continues to improve markedly since the dock strike settlement in August. Foreign trade figures for October show a deficit of only \$110 million, compared with \$315 million in September and a record \$443 million in August. If Prime Minister Heath's wage-price freeze can check the inroads of inflation on the competitive advantage resulting from the downward float of the pound, the trade account should continue to improve. (CONFIDENTIAL NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

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MEXICO: The recent hijacking of a Mexican airliner to Cuba could prompt the Echeverria government to adopt a more receptive attitude toward international legal efforts to combat air piracy. Mexico strongly upholds the right of individual states to grant political asylum and objects to any international conventions or treaties that do not explicitly state this right. In this case, however, the government considers the hijackers and prisoners freed as ransom to be common criminals and is seeking to extradite them from Cuba. Mexican officials have indirectly criticized the actions of the Castro regime, saying that countries which protect hijackers are responsible for plane hijackings. Should Cuba refuse extradition and grant the hijackers political asylum, as seems likely, the incident may help encourage Mexico to moderate its position on the right of asylum in cases where hijacking is involved. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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